INTRODUCTION

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The Context and acknowledgements

It has been more than two years since 35 scholars met at the International Conference on the Philosophy and Theology of St Gregory Palamas in Thessaloniki, Veroia and Holy Mt Athos, in March 2012.

The Conference was unique in terms of what it tried to establish: it is not only that it brought together theologians and philosophers, philosophers of art and cultural critics, monks and academics to exchange views in a free and open academic forum on possible readings of themes from the work of St Gregory Palamas; it also provided a valuable and unparalleled learning experience for the about one hundred participants from America, Europe and Russia. The Conference allowed its participants to worship together, venerate the relics of the Saint, travel to holy places in Thessaloniki, Veroia and the Holy Mount Athos and make many new lasting friendships along the way.

One of the key characteristics of the Conference was the ability to move into various venues of great interest for Palamite scholars in Northern Greece: we visited the Holy Church (Metropolitan Cathedral) of St Gregory Palamas in Thessaloniki, where his relics can be found (we celebrated his feast there); we visited the Holy Metropolis of Veroia and the Skete of Veroia (this is the Holy Metropolis that proposed in 2009 to the Ecumenical Patriarchate the recognition of all the family of St Gregory Palamas as Saints and the Skete, where the great Saint lived as a hermit for a few but significant years in his life); we visited the Holy Metropolis of Lagkada, Litis and Rentinis, where one can find the famous icon of *Palamas Enthroned* and where there was a long tradition of the Palamades families (in some areas of Greece, families of laity or groups of monks took the name *Palamades* or *Palamas* as part of their dedication to God; a tradition that produced the surname of the famous modern Greek poet Kostis Palamas, 1859-1943); we also visited the Holy Metropolis of Neapoleos and Stavroupoleos (where there is a conscious and systematic attempt to follow the Palamite ecclesiastical engagement with acute social

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problems, such as deprivation and hunger), and the Holy Monastery of Vatopaidi at Holy Mount Athos, (where the Saint lived for most of his life as a monk and spiritual father).

As the person who tried to manage all the details of the Conference programme and the various visits, I felt many times that all my efforts would have ended in a terrible failure, if it was not for the support of the Hierarchs and the other dedicated ecclesiastics involved: His Eminence the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki Mr. Anthimos; His Eminence the Metropolitan of Veroia, Naoussa and Campania, Mr. Panteleimon; His Eminence the Metropolitan of Lagkada, Litis and Rentinis, Mr. Ioannis; His Eminence the Metropolitan of Neapoleos and Stavroupoleos, Mr. Barnabas; and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia. They all embraced us as true spiritual fathers and ecclesiastical leaders, who know the value of St Gregory Palamas for all Orthodox, especially in today's world with the many spiritual challenges and temptations. In terms of the other ecclesiastics involved, a special thanks is owed to the following: Fr Georgios Milkas from the Holy Metropolis of Neapoleos and Stavroupoleos, Fr. Georgios Chrysostomou from the Holy Metropolis of Veroia (now His Eminence Metropolitan Georgios of Kitrous, Katerinis and Platamona), Fr George Stamkopoulos and Fr Nikolaos Loudovikos, both Professors at the University Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki, Abbot Porfyrios of Holy Monastery of St John the Baptist in Skete Veroias, and Abbot Ephraim and Monk Adrianos of Holy Monastery of Vatopaidi in Holy Mountain Athos. Special thanks are also owed to Professor C. Kontakis (President of the University Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki) and Professor G. Martzelos (of the Faculty of Theology, University of Thessaloniki and Director of Vlatadon Patriarchical Institute). Finally, thanks are owed to the Friends of Mount Athos (UK) and the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies in Cambridge (UK) for their assistance in some of the organisational details, before the start of the Conference.

The Papers in this Volume

From the 35 speakers at the Conference, 23 sent me their final papers to be published in a Volume of proceedings under my editorship. I thank our merciful God, Lord and Saviour, for allowing me to bring into success my promise to publish the proceedings, a task that occasionally seemed impossible to achieve; I also would like to thank the speakers, who sent me their papers, for their trust in me.

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The papers published here have been selected according to a two stage process: before the Conference, the abstracts of the papers had to be approved in terms of their academic merit; after the Conference, the speakers were invited to submit the final version of their papers according to specific academic standards; the authors who sent me their papers observing these standards and gave me permission to edit their work are now in the Volume. Further additions to the collection were deemed necessary, after the participation of three of the speakers at the Round Table on St Gregory Palamas during the 23rd World Congress of Philosophy in Athens (August 2013). Their work continues some of the ideas they expressed in the earlier Conference, so it was reasonable to include them in this Volume.

The Themes

The 13th and 14th centuries have been the most productive and influential in the history of philosophy and theology in the Christian West. Medieval philosophy and theology influenced in many ways contemporary European culture (a fact that is frequently overlooked by some contemporary atheists). A parallel and less influential (for the West) proliferation of arguments and theories took place in the Christian East, due to the defence of the Hesychastic movement offered by St Gregory Palamas and his followers. Palamas is relatively unknown to the West and his Theology and Philosophy remain obscure and relatively eccentric for most scholars (except perhaps a few but significant exceptions, such as the comments of Pope Benedict XVI on Nicholas Cabasilas' *The Life in Christ*; a Palamas inspired work from a Byzantine saint with strong connection to Palamas). This is by no accident. Palamite theology and philosophy remained dormant in its most part for more than 500 years; prior to this dormant phase, we have the official Church condemnation of the opponents of St Gregory Palamas and their excommunications in 1347 and 1351, the glorification of the Saint in 1368 and the institution of his feast on the Sunday immediately following the Sunday of Orthodoxy; Palamas' theology was recognised as a continuation of the Orthodox theology of icons and it still is the custom in Orthodox monasteries in Greece and Holy Mount Athos to read the Patriarchal Tome of excommunication against Palamas' opponents at the end of the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of St Gregory Palamas. Undoubtedly, the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Turks, and the subsequent ruthless subjugation of the East to a barbaric despot, was one of the main reasons for the gap in the widespread use of the Palamite treatises till the 20th century.

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This marginalisation of Palamism in the East is the result of many factors; the Saint was sold as a slave by pirates to the Muslims in the 1350s and he had to confront the best of what the Muslim scholarship had to offer at the time; it is significant that, among his surviving writings, there are works that confront most of the Muslim arguments about God with great success (they are known as *Letters to the Thessalonians* and in particular the *Lecture to Chionas*; a lecture that was discussed at the Conference). The persecution in the East was matched by the persecution in the West: the Roman-Catholics considered the writings of the Saint as a major obstacle in their plans for a unification of East and West, under the leadership of the Pope, for a significant part of the last 600 years. Dominican monks living close to Constantinople at the time of Palamas transmitted to Rome their fears for a potential overthrow of their theological scholastic supremacy very early. There is significant philosophical and theological evidence in St Gregory Palamas' corpus to justify this fear (as the careful reader of the papers that follow will find). But even the combined efforts of Martin Jugie, the scholarly contributions to the journal *Istina* and many other isolated and group efforts in the West during the 20th century proved unsuccessful to contain and reduce the scholarly thirst for answers to contemporary philosophical and theological problems via the Palamite ideas and corpus.

In this way, we come to two major sources for the awakening of the interest in Palamite writings in the 20th and 21st centuries: one is the widespread modern use among the Orthodox Church monastics of the collection of writings named *Philokalia* (*Φιλοκαλία*), with small extracts from Palamas' writings (edited by St Nikodemus of Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth in early 18th c., which was published in the West for the first time in Venice in 1782); the other is the *Critical Edition of the Writings of St Gregory Palamas* (*Συγγράμματα*), under the editorship of Professor P. Chrestou (University of Thessaloniki) with the help and support of a large team of significant scholars (Professor G. Mantzaridis, with two contributions in this Volume, being just one of its members) starting in the 1950s. The Critical Edition of the original works of St Gregory Palamas (which is based on a careful study of all surviving manuscripts) produced its last volume (5th Volume) in 1992 (the 1st Volume appeared in 1962), primarily due to the death of Professor Chrestou, but there are many modern Greek editions of works of St Gregory Palamas (some based on the Chrestou Critical Edition) in wide circulation in Greece currently. The Holy Monastery of Vatopaidi further promoted Palamite studies through the publication of the papers from the St Gregory Palamas Conferences in Athens (1998) and Lemessos (1999).

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These papers (48 in total) examined in detail various aspects of Palamite theology and were published in 2000 under the general supervision of Professor Mantzaridis (see Mantzaridis 2000).

In the English speaking world, the writings of the Saint remain known primarily through three sources: a small collection of his works in the *Patrologia Graeca* (Migne edition; in Vol. 150-151), the English edition of the *Philokalia* (edited by Palmer, Sherrard and Metropolitan Kallistos; in Vol. 4), and the publication of *The Triads* (in the Classics of Western Spirituality); more recently there are also some collections of his homilies and other minor works in circulation (such as the *150 Chapters*).

The papers contained in this Volume discuss the importance of Palamite ideas for our knowledge of God in terms of divine energies and our ability to receive and be glorified through them, and discuss the significance of the Palamite ideas in various contemporary debates in Philosophy, Science, Aesthetics and Ethics. Some of the contributors take a more reserved evaluation of the Palamite corpus, preferring to highlight similarities and differences between Palamas and the chief representatives of Medieval Scholasticism, such as Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and Ockham. Other contributors proceed to a radical re-evaluation of Western philosophy and theology, preferring to bring out the reasons for the various Western philosophical and theological shortcomings and offering a wider critique on Western culture. The list of contributors includes some of the top scholars in Palamite studies in both philosophy and theology.

Methodology and Content of Papers

It will be useful at this point to see briefly some of the main ideas and arguments proposed by the contributors. I have divided the papers submitted into two groups; this division may seem arbitrary at first, but it can be explained by the fact that the papers in each group have different aims and methodologies.

In the first (Metaphysics, Epistemology and Ethics in Philosophy and Theology), the papers investigate specific aspects in the Philosophy and Theology of St Gregory Palamas. Their approach is less historical and more systematic. They have an active interest in relating their theme to the wider contemporary concerns and debates in Philosophy and Theology (esp. about the nature of things and about God, the way we know the world and/or God, and the way we relate to other people and/or God).

In the second (Aesthetics, History and Cultural Context), the primary concern is to relate Palamite views to the wider historical and cultural context of his time. Perhaps some of the papers in the second group could

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be also fitted in the first; for ease of reference and a more research and pedagogy oriented approach (because the hope is that this Volume will not be useful to researchers but also students of philosophy and theology), a more or less arbitrary division had to take place, and I ask for the understanding and forgiveness of the authors, if they feel they should go in a different than the allocated group. My only hope is that my division is a less arbitrary than a more arbitrary one, on the basis of the above justification. I hope that the reader will appreciate the use of this division, after a careful reading of the included papers. In the part of the Introduction that follows, I outline the main arguments contained in the papers and the major connections between the papers in the two parts.

The Arguments and Ideas

The first eight papers set the theological agenda of the debates. Abbot Ephraim's contribution is discussing the issue of repentance in St Gregory Palamas' *Homilies*. He stresses that for the Saint repentance has nothing in common with similar pietistic tendencies in the West; here it has a dynamic, cleansing and restoring role; it is neither pessimistic nor does it make the true believer despondent; it gains a "gladsome mourning" character that is typical of the Palamite understanding of deification. Abbot Ephraim's discussion of *prosopeion* (facade or mask) as distinguished from the true ontology of person is a familiar theme in St Gregory Palamas' writings and is used as a theme repeatedly by contemporary Orthodox theologians (see for example Zizioulas 1977).

Monk Adrianos' contribution looks at the use of important Palamite ideas in the contemporary debates on secularisation and the role and nature of theology as an academic discipline. True theology is dependent on a vertical relation to God; lack of knowledge of the horizontal form of theology is deemed, however, a sin (he follows here a suggestion offered by Elder Sophrony of Essex). Monk Adrianos' critique on post-modernism and various recent theological attempts to re-interpret St Gregory Palamas as neo-patristic or post-patristic lies within the traditional defence of Orthodox monasticism to remain faithful to its own true and experiential knowledge about the union with God.

Hieromonk Melchisedec's contribution discusses the very crucial epistemological debates in both philosophy and theology; knowledge about God is important for both theological and philosophical epistemology. By relating the epistemological debates to ethics, Hieromonk Melchisedec brings back the true context of the late Byzantine discussions: Chrestou's twofold epistemology gains a new insight via the use of Elder Sophronios'

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and Saint Silouan's insistence that love is the key to understanding of how this twofold epistemology works in real life (as opposed to an armchair or theoretical one). Ultimately, the answer to the problem of the true relation between philosophy and theology must lie in removing the wedge between epistemology and ethics, as Hieromonk Melchisedec recommends; the consequences of adopting such a grand synthesis for possible solutions in many contemporary problems in theology and philosophy open new avenues for further research and scholarship.

Professor G. Mantzaridis' contributions need no recommendation. His authority stems not only from his position in the original editorial team of the Critical Edition of the Collected Works of Saint Gregory Palamas. His many works discussing Palamite ideas (some of them translated into English) provide more than sufficient evidence for his dedication and commitment to explaining Palamite positions and relating them to both the Orthodox patristic tradition and contemporary debates in Theology. Both of his contributions in this Volume were presented at the same Conference. He discussed at the beginning of the Conference (during the Opening Session at the University Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki and as it was indicated at the programme) only the paper comparing Elder Sophrony and Saint Gregory Palamas. However, after my request to enlighten some speakers at our Conference, who wrongly accused Saint Gregory Palamas of polytheism (or they were very close to doing so), Professor Mantzaridis kindly read the paper on the Simplicity of God at a subsequent session at the Holy Metropolis of Lagkada, Litis and Rentinis (at the International Academy of Theological and Philosophical Studies "Saint Cyril and Saint Methodios") as an *ad hoc* addition to the Programme. His paper on the Simplicity of God is by far the most clearly thought, far reaching, and poetic work on the theology of St Gregory Palamas that the reader will enjoy in this Volume. Here the reader will find abundant references to Saint Gregory Palamas' writings (with the original wording cited after the English translation); the reader also will note the Saint's carefully chosen words and their poetic but clear synthesis, showing how clearly structured and systematic Saint Gregory Palamas' theology and philosophy is. One can find in this paper not only a systematic exposition of the arguments that relate to the question of why Saint Gregory Palamas wrote about the Simplicity of God as one of the Triune God's key characteristics and energies, but also why some commentators chose to misinterpret the Saint's writings on this issue. As examples of such poor attempts to misinterpret Saint Gregory Palamas' thought, one could cite here some recent German scholars' attempts to accuse Palamas of ditheism or polytheism due to his distinction of divine

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essence and divine energy; other such recent attempts include some German, French, American and British scholars who claim that Palamas is close to the views of Thomas Aquinas on the simplicity of God. Both kinds of misinterpretations can be easily refuted, if one is to study carefully the paper of Professor Mantzaridis and the actual texts from Palamas. Many other contemporary approaches to Saint Gregory Palamas' ideas in anthropology, existence of God, issues on metaphysics and epistemology, eschatology and deification, would benefit greatly from a careful reading of Professor Mantzaridis' paper on the Simplicity of God according to Saint Gregory Palamas. The paper is a very good starting point for approaching correctly what Saint Gregory Palamas means by simplicity of God; I hope that the translation in English and my corrections (in both contributions of Professor Mantzaridis) do not take out anything significant from his main ideas.

The second paper of Professor Mantzaridis is discussing themes in the theology of St Gregory Palamas that were followed and further developed in the theology of Elder Sophronios of Essex. Two themes in particular are of greatest concern here: a) Saint Gregory Palamas' views on God have nothing to do with the essentialism that some commentators (both Orthodox and non-Orthodox) attribute to him. A key misinterpretation here lies in the attempt to regard Saint Gregory Palamas as close to Thomas Aquinas' position on God's essence. The careful reader here will however, see a false Manichaeism emerging in this misinterpretation: either we make Saint Gregory Palamas agree with positions like the ones offered by (for example) Averroes, Thomas Aquinas, Schelling or even Karl Barth on God's existence (in the case of Aquinas, God's existence is entailed by His essence) or we make him agree with essentialism on God (for example, of the Avicenna or the Hegelian variety, where essence as a category of Being is more important than Being itself). b) Professor Mantzaridis also shows that personalism is a wrong interpretation of both Saint Gregory Palamas and Elder Sophronios of Essex on deification; the Boethian *naturae rationabilis individua substantia* and its Thomist, Scotist and Suarezist overtones fail to capture the reality of the new Adam and thus, fail in two significant ways: a) in terms of their implied theological and philosophical anthropology and b) as approaches to deification. Again here, my advice is to approach Professor Mantzaridis' work as a start in a beautiful journey; interpreting Saint Gregory Palamas is hard work and Professor Mantzaridis shows some of the complexity of the task at hand.

Professor Tselengides' paper discusses the theological presuppositions that led the Roman-Catholics (or Latins) in the formulation and establishment of the *Filioque* in the West, on the basis of St Gregory

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Palamas' *Orations on the Procession of the Holy Spirit*. This early part of the Palamite corpus brought forward the key differences between Barlaam and St Gregory Palamas and depicted the radical agnosticism of Barlaam and the realistic and pragmatic tendencies in the work of Palamas. Professor Tselengides discusses, with considerable clarity, the important issues both in terms of doctrine and in terms of attitude towards doctrine, which Palamas identified behind the adoption of the *Filioque* in the West. The *typhos* of the Latins is summarily described in terms of both a diagnosis and a prognosis making this part of the Palamite corpus of high therapeutic and anthropological value (most notably Fr John Romanides and, more recently, Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, among others, have further elaborated this aspect of Palamism in their investigations into Orthodox Psychotherapy).

Professor Georgios Panagopoulos' paper is focused on the way that St. Gregory Palamas interprets key passages from the corpus of Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria in his *2nd Oration on the Procession of the Holy Spirit* to reject the *Filioque*. Through a quite interesting investigation (which in some ways is a continuation and further elaboration of the discourse outlined by Professor Tselengides in his own contribution here), Professor Panagopoulos approaches the hermeneutic endeavour of Palamas in this work through a grammatical, logical and ontological investigation. His main goal is to establish the coherence of Palamas' well-structured methodological approach to the relevant patristic texts; in doing so, he proves that Palamas' work summarizes quite well the Orthodox faith about the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone, affirming the experiential knowledge of God that the Apostles and Saints acknowledged in their distinctions between *ὑπόστασις* and *οὐσία,* using also the distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia.* Even though Professor Panagopoulos' work makes an undue (in my view) distinction between the theological and the philosophical endeavours in the work of Palamas, his detailed and scholarly approach to a quite difficult topic makes it an extremely valuable addition to this Volume and a worthwhile study material for both philosophers and theologians.

Dr Stavros Yangazoglou summarises the interpretations on the work of Palamas offered by Greek and Russian theologians and offers theological and ecclesiastical criteria upon which an evaluation of these interpretations can be initiated. His work is extremely valuable for all who are interested in establishing: a) what is the true value of Palamism in theological debates today and b) how difficult it is to make compatible the theology of this great Saint with key contemporary approaches to Ecclesiology in the West. In Yangazoglou's interpretation, Palamas' mystical theology has

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nothing in common with many other significant forms of mysticism and resists persistently the rather simplified contemporary academic approaches.

The subsequent papers in the first part enable us to appreciate primarily the philosophical value of Palamas' work.

Professor Stephen R. L. Clark's contribution attempts a comparison of Palamas' work to Plotinian Neoplatonism, trying to establish how far was Palamas influenced from it. Again, here, as in the case of Professor Mantzaridis, Professor Clark needs no recommendation from me. He is an important scholar in Ancient Greek Philosophy (and many other philosophical areas) with many significant publications. He tries to approach Palamas' agenda from an objective and non-biased perspective and he manages to establish, I think quite successfully, three key claims: a) Meyendorff was wrong in his claim that Palamas did not have a good understanding of Plato and the Neoplatonists (in fact Meyendorff was wrong about both Palamas and Barlaam, as Professor Clark very well shows); Meyendorff's use of incorrect philosophical terminology perhaps has led many philosophical and theological commentators astray; some key (unsubstantiated) claims about Palamas in wide circulation today in USA and UK perhaps are due to Meyendorff's misunderstanding of the details of the philosophical education that Palamas had to have under the guidance of Theodoros Metochites (I am discussing in detail this topic in a forthcoming work, so I will not enlarge upon this issue here); b) commentators with philosophical inclinations who claim that Palamas was not a good philosopher or that he applied wrongly philosophical methodologies and logic are wrong (the claim can be attributed to scholars -among them more recent are perhaps Sinkewicz and Ierodiakonou- who, in my understanding, support their views via a restricted in scope interpretation of specific passages in the Aristotelian corpus -again I discuss this in more detail in another forthcoming work, so I will not enlarge on this here); c) Barlaam had a fragmentary and incomplete understanding of key texts in Ancient Greek Philosophy and, as such, he could not understand the complexity of the arguments of Palamas. Professor Clark's authoritative analysis of themes from Plotinus that are close to key theses in the Palamite works, no doubt, will instigate further research in the philosophical sources of Palamas and how far these can influence a more appropriate interpretation for his overall defence of hesychasm and his use of the philosophical concept of *energeia*. There are however, a couple of issues (at least) that Orthodox theologians may see as problematic in Professor Clark's very insightful paper and Orthodox philosophers may have these in mind, when using the overall very

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interesting contribution of Professor Clark. One has to do with the absolute freedom of God that is of paramount importance in the work of Saint Gregory Palamas. Divine energies do not emanate on their own, nor can they create on their own, except perhaps in a metaphorical way. They depend on the absolutely free will of God. The very fact that they create is also not dependent on them. Again, it depends on God whether they exhibit this property or not. It also depends on the free will of the man, who will co-operate with God in receiving them. I think the differentiation from Plotinus here is of key importance (even though I agree with Professor Clark that the stereotypes being traditionally proposed are far from a correct interpretation of the complexity of Plotinus' metaphysics and ethics). The other issue has to do with memory. In Palamas' perspective, memory is of paramount importance for salvation; sin and remembrance of sin are important in both the cleansing process through repentance and in the seeking of forgiveness. They are also factors that make our love for God even more strong both now and in the glorified state; memories are important both before and after salvation; they are part of who we are; the Orthodox belief about salvation is that we will be saved as a psychosomatic unity, as complete humans, and not in parts. The first five papers in this Volume discuss the issues related to repentance and salvation: Abbot Efraim, Monk Adrianos, Hieromonk Melchisedec and Professor Mantzaridis, all discuss this key area in Palamas' theology. But, as I have already mentioned, there are many insights in Professor Clark's contribution to merit a detailed study, for philosophers and theologians alike.

Professor Oleg E. Dushin's contributions (the first presented at the International Conference of 2012 and the second at the Round Table Discussion of 2013) discuss the significant influence of Palamism to the development of modern and contemporary Russian Orthodox Theology, Philosophy and Science. Through his learned and detailed studies of the Moscow School of Christian Neo-Platonism and the School of the Slavophiles (both influential on the wider Russian contemporary philosophical circles and Russian science and technology), one can find important and often neglected aspects of how Palamism can contribute to the development of a distinctively Orthodox outlook on our understanding of the world; our current means of understanding, as Professor Dushin shows, are rather limited due to an uncritical adoption of modern scientific norms of rationality and a more serious study of Palamite epistemology might enable us to improve on our scientific, philosophical and theological understanding of both world and man.

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Professor Mihai Dan Chițoiu discusses how Palamas' mysticism can help Western scientific epistemology go beyond representationalism to true realism. He shows how both mysticism and contemporary scientific theory can be joined into a coherent philosophical and theological system. Both his method and observations look very promising for a solution to some of the most cumbersome contemporary philosophy of science and epistemology problems.

Professor Christoph Erismann discusses how Gregory Palamas' *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters* relate to Aristotle's *Categories*. He proves convincingly that Palamas offers an original solution to the problem of how the Aristotelian categories can be applied to God, finding that three categories (substance, relation and action) are particularly relevant. He also holds an original view regarding the mode of being for universals, as drawing energy from each of their individuals. Professor Erismann's work provides further evidence to the claim put forward by Kokkinos (Palamas' Byzantine biographer) that Palamas could use very well his Aristotelian studies to provide strong support to his philosophical and theological claims. It also proves that some of the recent work on Palamas in Germany, USA, France, UK and Greece, which moves in the direction of discrediting Palamas' philosophical acuity can only result in a complete failure to understand Palamas' novel approach to ancient Greek logic and metaphysics.

Rev. Professor Manuel Sumares' work discusses Palamas' *Orations on the Mother of God*. These texts are of great value for both philosophers and theologians. One cannot understand Palamas' anthropology and the mystical tendencies in St Gregory Palamas' philosophy and theology without a very detailed study of these orations. Fr Manuel provides a summary of Palamas' arguments and offers some interesting insights regarding Spinoza, Heidegger and Michel Henry.

Rev. Professor Nikolaos Loudovikos' contribution goes a step further in the same direction. His discussion of how Palamas' theology and philosophy can help us take a distinctive Orthodox position on History is both illuminating and valuable for all Christians with an interest on Philosophy of History and Philosophy of Culture and Civilisation. His critique on Thomas Aquinas and Aquinas' influence on Hegel and other modern and contemporary philosophers (including Taylor) is opening new horizons for further research. His use of Lipovetsky to describe the narcissistic tendencies in Thomistic thought and its contemporary representatives goes in parallel to the first theological contributions in this volume (Abbot Ephraim's of Vatopaidi contribution makes explicit reference to this), which criticise western culture and modernity for what

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Palamas called *προσωπεῖον* (mask or facade). His rather interesting critique on Balthasar, his use of intuitions from the works of Heidegger and Lasch, and his wider critique on our contemporary political culture and its endemic theological and philosophical problems make his text an essential reading for all political and cultural theorists with an interest in Orthodoxy. Even if some Orthodox (like myself) are rather pessimistic about Fr Nikolaos' approach to improve on Aquinas through Palamas (due to serious problems in Aquinas' Philosophy and Theology and significant incompatibilities between the two, some of which Fr Nikolaos himself admits in his contribution here), his project is both illuminating and hopeful; and definitely in need of further reflection and serious consideration from all Orthodox (pessimist and optimist alike).

Dr. Filip Ivanovic, in his very interesting contribution, re-affirms the continuity of Orthodox Mysticism from the Areopagetic texts to St Gregory Palamas identifying common themes between its early and late Byzantine phases. He insists that Palamas should not be seen as opposing the early phase in this Mystical Tradition, but only as making new connections between man and the angelic powers and re-affirming the role of man in the deification process. Dr Ivanovic's work could be seen as the philosophical counterpart to the first few discussions in this volume on the theology of St Gregory Palamas and moves within the parameters of mainstream Orthodox thought on the Areopagetic texts.

Dr Norman Russell has as his focus the work of Demetrakopoulos on the Palamite distinction between essence and energies. While his discussion is courteous to Dematrakopoulos' work, he uses his own scholarly studies of the period to outline his disagreement with Dematrakopoulos' reading of key passages from Palamas' works. I would like to add here the opposition to Demetrakopoulos' project from most of the papers in this volume, starting with Mantzaridis (who discusses directly the misinterpretation of Palamas' texts on the issue of the Simplicity of God). Further ideas on how wrong is Demetrakopoulos' project in its approach, one may find in the work of Yangazoglou, Tselengides, Fr Nikolaos Loudovikos, Stephen R. L. Clark, Erismann, and Georgios Panagopoulos.

Rev. Michael Pacella III, in his two papers, outlines how Palamas' approach to philosophy and theology is solidly based on the Fathers (primarily St John the Damascene and the Cappadocians). The first paper in some of its claims (esp. in relation to Aquinas) goes against other discussions in this volume (primarily the contributions of Fr Nikolaos Loudovikos, Yangazoglou, Norman Russell, Tselengides and Georgios Panagopoulos), but, overall, both papers show that certainly Palamas

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believed in the co-operation between Philosophy and Theology (a common theme in many of the contributions in this volume).

Ms Patrícia Calvário in her discussion presents some of the metaphysical and logical challenges that Palamas had to face in terms of accommodating both the *apophatic* demands in terms of essence and the *cataphatic* demands in terms of energies. In her work, she discusses issues that get further elaborated in the more theological works included here (primarily the works of Mantzaridis, Yangazoglou, Tselengides, Abbot Ephraim and Monk Adrianos and Hieromonk Melchisedec), but her agenda is indeed at the centre of the philosophical approaches to Palamas' work (indeed some of the philosophical issues she discusses are developed further in the work of Fr Nikolaos Loudovikos, Fr Demetrios Harper, Erismann and Ivanovic and answers to the questions she raises can be found in the work of Kneževic included in this Volume). In her approach, she is more close to Pacella than the rest of the papers presented here. Together with Professor Clark's contribution, they represent the pluralism with which Palamas' work may be regarded. This pluralism the researcher into Palamas Studies may find most valuable for an academic and balanced dialogue with the arguments at hand.

Fr Demetrios Harper's contribution is a further development in the discussion of some patristic themes related to Palamas' anthropology (both in theology and philosophy). Most of Fr Demetrios' discussion relates to the one offered by Professor Mantzaridis and Fr Nikolaos Loudovikos. Fr Demetrios' discussion of how the Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Palamas relates to his Anthropology explains further some of the ideas mentioned in Fr Nikolaos' and Hieromonk Melchisedec's work. Fr Demetrios' elaboration on how Palamas' views on the *kat' eikona* and Transfiguration of Christ relates to both Palamas' views on death and Palamas' Soteriology is a further elaboration of some ideas mentioned in the theological papers of this volume (i.e., Abbot Ephraim's, Monk Adrianos', Hieromonk Melchisedec's, Mantzaridis' and Yangazoglou's works).

In the second part, dealing with the history, aesthetics and wider cultural context of the debates, we start with the work of Professor Koltsiou-Nikita, who examines a rather controversial intellectual figure of the period, Demetrios Kydones. Even though the Kydones brothers were against Palamas and his followers, we can gain important insights regarding the culture of the period through an examination of their lives and work. So, for example, we see, in Koltsiou-Nikita's work, the importance of the role of Emperor Ioannis VI Kantakouzenos (who after the peak of the Palamas- Varlaam controversy abdicated and became

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known as monk Joasaph) in the transformation of the theological debates into major political and ecclesiastical confrontations. Her work relates well with Russell's work in this volume and touches also on the issue of simplicity of God, which is the topic of one of Mantzaridis' papers.

Dr Mikonjia Kneževic's scholarly contribution examines in detail the cultural semantics (philosophical, theological, philological and etymological) that Palamas was engaged in, when he discussed the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Son and the Father in his *Apodeictic Treatises*. Kneževic proves forcefully that even though there is an apparent inconsistency in the way that Palamas is using the prepositions *ek* and *dia* to describe this complex relationship, this inconsistency can be justified due to two main factors: a) Palamas' wish to incorporate, use and interpret correctly the majority of the patristic texts used in the arguments employed at the *Filioque* debates, and b) his honesty in outlining how he conceives this inconsistency as not important due to the possibility of a non-causal interpretation of the proposition "*ek*". Kneževic's work is both systematic and of wider historical and cultural significance, as a hermeneutic study of how these prepositions were used in the cultural context of the time. It serves very well as providing further textual and semantic evidence to the papers of Mantzaridis, Tselengides, Yangazoglou, Georgios Panagopoulos, Erismann, Loudovikos, Russell and Harper. It also serves very well as a basis for a possible response to the papers of Calvário and Pacella and the questions and issues they raise in their work regarding the possibilities for a re-evaluation of the *Filioque* debates. Finally, Kneževic (combined perhaps with Russell's and other authors' papers contained in this Volume) offers a detailed response on some rather implausible readings of Palamas' corpus in terms of Palamas' use of these two prepositions (evidenced for example in the Barlaam and the Kydones brothers' texts and more recently in John Demetracopoulos', Sinkewicz', Ierodiakonou's, Ivánka's, Williams' and Lowell Clucas' works).

Dr Elena Dulgheru discusses the interesting work of Yuri Holdin, a Russian photographer, who dedicated a large part of his life in capturing through light the work and vision of Dionisy, an almost forgotten Russian iconographer with experiences of Taboric light. Here Palamism is expressed in new media and forms and makes the Palamite studies gain a new horizon for further development.

Dr Dimitar Atanassov's cultural theory discussion of a letter written by the higher Emperial Court administrator Theodoros Metochites, the teacher of St Gregory Palamas during his youth and a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Constantinople, provides further detail regarding the cultural context of the theological and philosophical debates

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that the other papers in this Volume discuss. Atanassov is using the letter (and the relevant ethnological and historical research) as a starting point in his attempt to embark in a cultural re-evaluation of both the Byzantine intellectuals and the Serbs of that time. The relevant conceptual models and paradigms are analysed, compared and contrasted via the use of phenomenological and deconstruction related methods. His work produces interesting observations regarding the cultural context within which St Gregory Palamas developed and matured. Palamite scholars can find valuable tools in terms of justifying culturally the work of St Gregory Palamas and the anti-intellectualist tendencies in his philosophy and theology.

We conclude this section of the Volume with the work of Dr Spyridon Panagopoulos, who shows how Palamas influenced the Byzantine iconographers in the late 14th c. Particular emphasis is given to the work of Theophanes the Cretan and we see through his work how Palamas provided the theological and philosophical basis of what has been termed as *hesychastic humanism* in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine Orthodox iconography. The discussion of Spyridon Panagopoulos accompanies very well the earlier discussion of Dulgheru in this Volume and provides further evidence for some of the influence Palamas had on the development of Russian iconography and icon studies.

I would like to close this Introduction with a few thoughts wishing to summarise, in a way, the main findings from the Conference.

One can see two major phases in the debates between Barlaam and Palamas.

In the first (early) phase, the focus was methodological; this is how the whole controversy started. Basically Palamas tried to show to Barlaam that Barlaam was using philosophical categories about relations that do not allow the absolute freedom of the *hypostases* of God; this absolute freedom is necessary, if one is to discuss appropriately, and in an Orthodox way, the relationship between the three persons of the Holy Trinity. Both were agreeing that the Roman Catholic position is wrong on the *Filioque*. Their disagreement was on the issue of the appropriate methodology we should use to arrive at the opposition to the Roman-Catholic addition to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. To support their views on this issue, they used the very best that Philosophy could offer at the time: Neo-Platonic, Aristoteleian and Stoic Metaphysics, Logic and Epistemology. But they also wanted to be true to the Patristic heritage and the true dogma of the Orthodox Church as expressed in the Creed. This was more of a priority for Palamas than for Barlaam, but Barlaam was also

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conscious about this. In their theological approach, they followed the Cappadocians and other later Fathers of the Church (with Palamas using more extensively the Areopagetic Corpus and St Maximus the Confessor).

In the second phase, the focus shifted to the *Hesychastic* practice. This, indirectly, supports the view that Barlaam, seeing that he cannot confront the arguments of Palamas on the theological and philosophical level on the methodology that is to be followed regarding the persons of the Holy Trinity, attacked Palamas on the personal level: Palamas was a representative of the *Hesychastic* practice as a method to approach God, and Barlaam thought that, by attacking this practice, he can discredit, in this way, Palamas (who had gained in the controversy on the *Filioque* many followers from the intellectual, ecclesiastical and political circles of Constantinople). The debates during this phase became rather polemical, but arguments from both disciplines (Philosophy and Theology), were used in abundance, in their attempts to use, interpret and re-interpret specific texts from the Fathers and the Holy Bible. There were discussions at the Conference of how far Palamas' arguments can be compared with similar arguments in the West (primarily with Aquinas) or with older periods (primarily Aristotle and the Neoplatonists). I think the correct way to establish this should be through a rigorous examination regarding the following two questions: a) Is absolute freedom for both God and man (as discussed from the time of Maximus the Confessor) secured? For Palamas, absolute freedom for both God and man should not be sacrificed for metaphysical/ logical/ epistemological considerations. b) Is a division of the uncreated and the created maintained at all levels of will and mind/spirit? This radical division can be overturned with the act of God, but it should always be recognised in the relevant metaphysics, especially at the level of essence (*ousia*). For Palamas, both of these conditions are equally important. If any theory or interpretation falls short on either of these conditions, it is deficient in the eyes of Palamas.

It is important to add in all this the wider cultural context: from example, on the one hand, the influence of Theodoros Metochites, as a teacher on both St Gregory Palamas and Nicephoros Gregoras, who followed Barlaam, and, on the other, Emperor John Kantakouzinos' political and ecclesiastical ambient power throughout both phases of the controversy; this wider cultural context had a major significance in making this the most influential philosophical and theological controversy of the 14th c.

Both the variety of the topics discussed and the quality of the discussions at the Conference or Thessaloniki and Holy Mt Athos and the Round Table at the World Congress of Philosophy in Athens, guarantee

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the success of this publication and its good reception from scholars interested in late Byzantium and the debates between Barlaam and Palamas. There could be a more detailed discussion of some key aspects in these debates: for example, the logical theory employed by the two protagonists and the ramifications of their approach for contemporary debates in Ecology and Environmental Philosophy and other philosophical and theological disciplines (not already discussed in this Volume), but these topics, perhaps, can be further discussed in future Conferences. I have published in the past some of my views on these and related topics and there is further forthcoming work (see primarily in Athanasopoulos 1994; 2002; 2004; 2009; 2010; 2012; 2013; 2014).

Undoubtedly, the influence of these debates in the development of Christianity and indeed in the development of the philosophical and theological disciplines in Europe was of tremendous importance. That we have decided so late to appreciate and re-evaluate their significance, only shows our ignorance about our own past.

On my part, I will continue to work for the promotion of Palamas Studies to the best of my abilities. In the context of this, we have created, with Professor Dan Chițoiu and Professor Oleg Dushin (contributors in this Volume), the Palamas Seminar and we have now united forces with collaborators internationally (some of whom are contributors in this Volume) to organise Conferences on Palamas Studies on a yearly basis. As a first step, we have organised, with the assistance of the Holy Metropolis of Veroia, Naousa and Campania. an International Conference on the Philosophy and Theology of St Gregory Palamas (with an emphasis on Hesychasm) in June 2015 (Veroia, Greece). I hope the efforts of the Palamas Seminar will be successful and further developments will follow.

In my efforts, I am supported by my family: my father Georgios, who recently "slept in the Lord" and my mother Charikleia, my brother Ioannis and my two sisters, Ioanna and Eurykleia, my wife Maria and our two daughters (Dimitra and Georgia-Charikleia). Support (primarily spiritual) I have received by the ecclesiastics in UK (His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain, Fr Constantinos in Glasgow and Fr Raphael in Edinburgh, and the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters at the Holy Monastery of St John the Baptist in Essex) and Greece (the Fathers at the Holy Monasteries at Skete Veroias and esp. Fr Palamas at Kallipetra, the Fathers at the Holy Monastery of Parakletos at Oropos and the Fathers at the Holy Monastery of Vatopaidi).

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Lastly, I thank our Lord for allowing me to finish this project and I pray that our merciful Saviour will continue assisting and guiding us in our efforts, with the intercessions of Theotokos, St Gregory Palamas and indeed of all the Saints and the Angelic Powers.

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